DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 396 246 CS 012 486

AUTHOR Trimble, Hilary Claire
TITLE Reading Comprehension: A Whole Language Effect on Academic Sucess.
PUB DATE Apr 96
NOTE 30p.; M.S. Thesis, Dominican College of San Rafael.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Masters Theses (042) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; Comparative Analysis; Elementary Education; Learning Processes; Oral Reading; *Reading Comprehension; Reading Improvement; *Reading Instruction; Reading Research; Reading Skills; *Whole Language Approach
IDENTIFIERS Teacher Surveys

ABSTRACT

A study examined the effect of whole language philosophy as compared to a more traditional reading program on children's reading comprehension scores. The study included a review of current research indicating the importance of teachers stating the topic prior to reading as well as the importance of students' oral reading ability to assess reading proficiency. The study consisted of questionnaires and interviews of a sample of primary grade teachers. Subjects were eight female teachers of grades 1-4, from a private school. The questionnaire, consisting of 10 statements that the subjects rated on a scale from 1 to 5, posed questions on teachers' individual reading programs and their perceptions of student reading comprehension. Interviews explored the same area of inquiry. Questionnaires and interview results were examined for commonalities and themes. Results indicated the importance of precise reading in increasing overall academic success. Findings suggest that there should be a focus on emphasizing accuracy in reading to provide for success. (Contains 16 references, 1 table of data, and a 2-page questionnaire.) (Author/CR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

CS

ED 396 246

READING COMPREHENSION: A WHOLE LANGUAGE EFFECT ON ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Running Head: Reading Comprehension

BY

HILARY CLAIRE TRIMBLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

H Trimble

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

A Thesis

Submitted to

the Faculty of the Graduate School of Education

of Dominican College of San Rafael

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Masters of Science in Education

April, 1996
San Rafael, California

CS012486

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have believed in me through this process. A very special thank you to my parents who are the most wonderful people in the world. If it were not for their constant support, I would not be where I am today. My sisters and brother always pushed me to keep up with them in all of our adventures and they continue to do so now.

Thank you to the School of Education at Dominican College, especially Dr. Madalienne Peters and Dean Barry Kaufman, for all the long hours of encouragement and help every step of the way.

Thanks also to all of my teachers, former and present, who have inspired me to use my gift of teaching to the best of my abilities, and finally, to all of my friends. To one in particular, I owe a great deal of thanks for the long talks and encouragement to continue on with my dreams.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hilary Claire Trimble has completed her Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Dominican College and is a classroom teacher. Her background is psychology and elementary education. She has chosen to focus on the topic of reading comprehension because of an interest that developed during temporary teaching assignments. Students were having difficulty recalling previous readings. The question arose that possibly the students had difficulty reading. The method that was used to teach children to read may have had an effect on their comprehension.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of a whole language philosophy as compared to a more traditional reading program on children's reading comprehension scores. Current research indicated the importance of teachers stating the topic of reading prior to reading as well as the importance of students' oral reading ability to assess reading proficiency. The research consisted of questionnaires and interviews of a sample of primary grade teachers in one school. The question examined teachers' individual reading programs and their perceptions of student reading comprehension. Results showed the importance of precise reading in increasing overall academic success. Implications of these findings indicate that there should be a focus in emphasizing accuracy in reading to provide for success.

INTRODUCTION

Newspaper articles reveal that students are not succeeding in basic skills. Reading is the most important skill a child needs to learn in order to succeed in life. Parents are wondering how their children are learning to read. As the student population has changed, so have teaching techniques. There has been a move away from basic instruction to more of a connected curriculum. This is particularly true in reading instruction where a philosophy based on seeing language arts as a whole, has emerged. Students are participating in group activities where they discuss and share information. However, through this new curriculum, the question still remains, are the students learning? Are they understanding what they are learning? It is important for students in primary years to strengthen their skills, in particular, reading skills, in order to succeed academically in future school years. This study focuses on the relationship of the whole language method of teaching to reading comprehension.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Is there an effect on children's reading comprehension ability, when teachers structure their instruction based on a whole language philosophy as compared to a traditional approach to teaching reading, with an emphasis on skills instruction?

Whole language is a philosophical approach that includes teaching strategies which view language as a whole, not in parts, as is traditionally taught. Reading comprehension is defined as the recall and interpretation of material read. Primary years, for the purpose of this paper, is limited to grades one through four.

RATIONALE

Brian Cambourne's Model of Literacy Learning gives some background on the whole language philosophy. The model consists of seven terms which are interrelated in regard to reading. The model emphasizes the importance of engagement or interest in reading the text. Engagement occurs when the reader is confident and can follow directions from the teacher (Routman, 1991). It is important for children to repeat what they have read. This helps students increase their understanding of reading material. Teachers must allow time for discussion so that students have the opportunity to learn from each other. One part of the model refers to "expectation", which is what the learner expects to learn. Another part, "responsibility", is where the learner makes decisions about what to learn. "Use" is where the learners take the opportunity to use what they have learned, and "approximation" is where the learner may make mistakes in the decision process. "Response" is where the learner is given feedback. With all of these terms in place, engagement, for the reader, is increased (Routman, 1991). Reading comprehension most

likely occurs during use, approximation, and response. During these stages, the reader is able to take time to think, make mistakes, and receive feedback.

According to Adams (1990), teachers using basal reader programs are also using the supplements that are provided with the program. The rate at which the students progress through one story shows how they will progress through the program. Phonics takes time, and it is the specific phonics instruction, used in the classroom, that will teach students to appreciate what they are reading. The purpose of reading is comprehension, and the reader needs to be somewhat familiar with a word in order to fully understand its meaning and relation to the sentence.

BACKGROUND AND NEED

According to the Report on the Commission on Reading, Becoming a Nation of Readers, students' prior knowledge has a great effect on the outcome of the reading. Preparation, in which the teacher gives a brief discussion on the topic, is the first stage in the comprehension. From prior knowledge, the students form an idea of what they are about to read. The second stage is the actual reading process. In this stage, the reader may be given the opportunity to read aloud. By this example of reading, the teacher has the chance to check how the reader is progressing (Anderson, Hiebart, Scott, Wilkinson, 1985).

Oral reading is a crucial aspect of literacy. When children read aloud, teachers can correct pronunciation, and can ensure that children understand what they read. Teachers have the opportunity to ask comprehension questions. Discussion on the topic may aid in an understanding of what has been read. Each student is able to give input and interpretations may be corrected as needed.

Cunningham and Wall (1994) looked at the comprehension skills of academically gifted high school freshmen. They discovered that giving students background information on a topic is important before the reader becomes engaged in reading. Also, when a teacher sets a purpose for the reading, this strategy helps the reader focus on aspects in the reading, and helps the reader look for important information to remember for follow-up discussion. It seems important for any reader to anticipate what is expected after reading the material.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Reading is the most important subject in school for young children. In order to further progress in their education, as well as in life, children need to know how to read. With knowing how to read, it is important that children can recall what has been read. A review of the literature revealed that the following areas were important to this study: the teacher's role in whole language, motivation in reading, integration of

whole language and traditional skills-based approach, and overall student achievement.

The teacher's role in a whole language classroom is as a "co-learner" (Routman, 1991). The teacher does not completely direct the class, however learns what works and what does not along with the children. In reading, the teacher is a role model for the students. According to Campbell and Scrivens (1995), the teacher's roles are supporter, sharer, and reader. They found that when the teacher was reading during Silent Sustained Reading (SSR), there was a high level of reading by the children. This study looked at the role of teachers during silent reading. They found that this program was successful according to the classroom organization and "school ethos" (p. 3). The teachers had the support of the school to offer twenty minutes a day for silent reading.

Mavrognes (1990) emphasizes the importance of modeling to children. It is crucial to read to children. This increases interactions as well as helps the child to understand language and increase listening and attention skills. It is important that these aspects are reinforced because it will increase comprehension and vocabulary as well as aid in academic success.

Dudley-Marling (1995) stated in his nine principles of the whole language philosophy that "teachers must practice what they teach" (p. 110). We know as educators that children rely on us to have the

answers but also to be examples to our students. We must show children that what we say is what we do, and if they see us reading a book, most likely, they will be motivated to read one as well.

In research done on oral reading instruction, Reutzel, Hollingsworth, and Eldredge (1991) used two different techniques to study reading development and comprehension. In oral reading, turn-taking is applied and attention skills are increased. The two techniques were the Shared Book Experience (SBE) and the Oral Recitation Lesson (ORL). Even though the results could not be generalized, there was no difference in comprehension with either technique. In ORL, each child is given one passage to read. This way they practice repeatedly. SBE increased responses to questions asked. This technique is exciting for the children and keeps their attention focused on the story.

The students have an increased motivation to read if they understand what they are reading and they receive the feedback necessary to continue on to a new level. Erpelding (1990) looked at incorporating the whole language philosophy with the basal reader. Three questions were addressed. The first question was whether journal writing would increase students' knowledge of the correct use of language: capitalization, punctuation, length of sentences, subject -verb use and length of written work. The second was whether use of sustained silent reading and reading to the students would increase motivation to read

and comprehend of literature. The third asked if whole language would increase a student's positive attitude toward reading (Erpelding, 1990). Though the sample group was small, only twenty subjects, student performance improved one grade level in reading comprehension over sixteen weeks. Students had a positive attitude toward reading, improving in areas of punctuation, length of sentence, suject-verb agreement, and length of written work. They did not improve in their ability to use capital letters correctly. However, for the purposes of this study, reading comprehension improved.

Morrow and Smith (1990) studied the effect of group size on interactive reading. They looked at three different group sizes; whole-class, small group, and one-on-one. They found that comprehension was highest with one-on-one; small group is more practical for a classroom situation. It increases group participation as well as providing individual attention when necessary.

The whole language method works if many aspects of the philosophy are in place. Through the whole language philosophy, student background knowledge is activated and writing becomes more creative. It is important that the teacher has high enthusiasm for the program, according to Gee (1995). His study focused on other research of the effect of whole language philosophy on reading comprehension. According to the study, whole language instruction resulted in higher

reading achievement. Although only 21 studies were reviewed, the information was important.

McDonald and Burris (1995) studied the attitudes of two school faculties to the change from basic skills to whole language. After two years of workshops on whole language instruction, all subjects found that the children retained material when they could experience it and relate it to what they were learning (McDonald, Burris, 1995). Even though a small sample was used, results correlated with other research in that students demonstrated a positive attitude toward reading in a literature-based reading approach. Everyone showed an increase in confidence in their work when everyone was supportive of each other.

Hedrick and Cunningham (1995) studied the relationship between wide reading and listening comprehension of written language. They found that good listening comprehenders chose to read in their spare time, instead of doing other activities. High levels of wide reading were associated with a greater ability to comprehend written language while listening (Hedrick and Cunningham, 1995). This is important because of the emphasis put on oral reading in whole language classrooms.

Cunningham and Allington (1991) discuss a three stage approach to helping children with their reading skills, which include reading aloud and working together. In classrooms where children are learning to read, teachers who use big books found that they help children follow along as

a group. By acting out stories, using words from their own sentences, and pulling apart words into letters with sounds, children build on their comprehension skills. While they are reading, they are making connections, and are able to participate in post reading activities.

From the teacher setting a positive role, the students were able to enjoy increased motivation in reading. From the research, it is essential that students find enjoyment in the reading because they will be able to make connections for themselves. A theory behind whole language philosophy is that children are able to relate to what they are learning. Students need to learn how to read and understand what they are reading. The more experience they have with reading, the more they will succeed.

METHODOLOGY

Human Subjects Consideration:

To ensure the protection of the rights of human subjects, this research study adhered to the ethical standards of the APA (1994). Subjects were informed of the general nature of this study, the basic purpose, rights to confidentiality, researcher's availability to answer questions before, during, and after. Special consent forms were provided and permission to conduct the study was granted. Names were not used. Opportunities to learn results of the study were provided. Participants were informed that they could withdraw at anytime.

Subjects:

Table 1 shows the results of mean calculations compiled from demographic questionnaires sent to the teachers.

Table 1
N= 8 female teachers

Teacher Demographics	mean
Years of teaching experience	18
Years of experience in present school	7
Experience with In-Service Language Arts Hours	35
Hours of In-service in:	
Basic Skills	22
Whole Language	18

Student Demographics		
Gender:	Female	85
	Male	72
Ethnicity:	Caucasian	153
	Asian	3
	Hispanic	1
Reading Test Scores:		
Above average		26
Average		125
Below Average		6

Eight teachers, all female, from a private school in the North Bay Area, were sent questionnaires and participated in interviews. The teachers of grades one through four were selected because they had an actual reading time scheduled, on a daily basis, in their school day. Subjects were given a questionnaire regarding demographic information on students as well as themselves, and specific questions describing their

reading program. Subjects completed demographic information including years of experience in teaching as well as in the present school, experience with in-service education in the language arts area and approximate number of hours of in-service in basic reading strategies and whole language instruction. The teachers also completed demographic information on students including number of male and female, ethnicity, and reading test scores from the previous year.

All teachers had between four and forty years of experience in teaching and between one and twenty-two years of experience in the present school. All indicated they had experience with in-service education in the language arts area. Two teachers indicated more hours in whole language instruction than basic skills in-service. The other teachers indicated having more in-service in basic skills instruction. All teachers had an almost equal number of males and females in the classroom, mostly Caucasian with two indicating another ethnicity: Asian. The teachers indicated that reading scores were either above average or average from the previous year. One teacher indicated that there were some below average in her classroom.

Materials and Procedures:

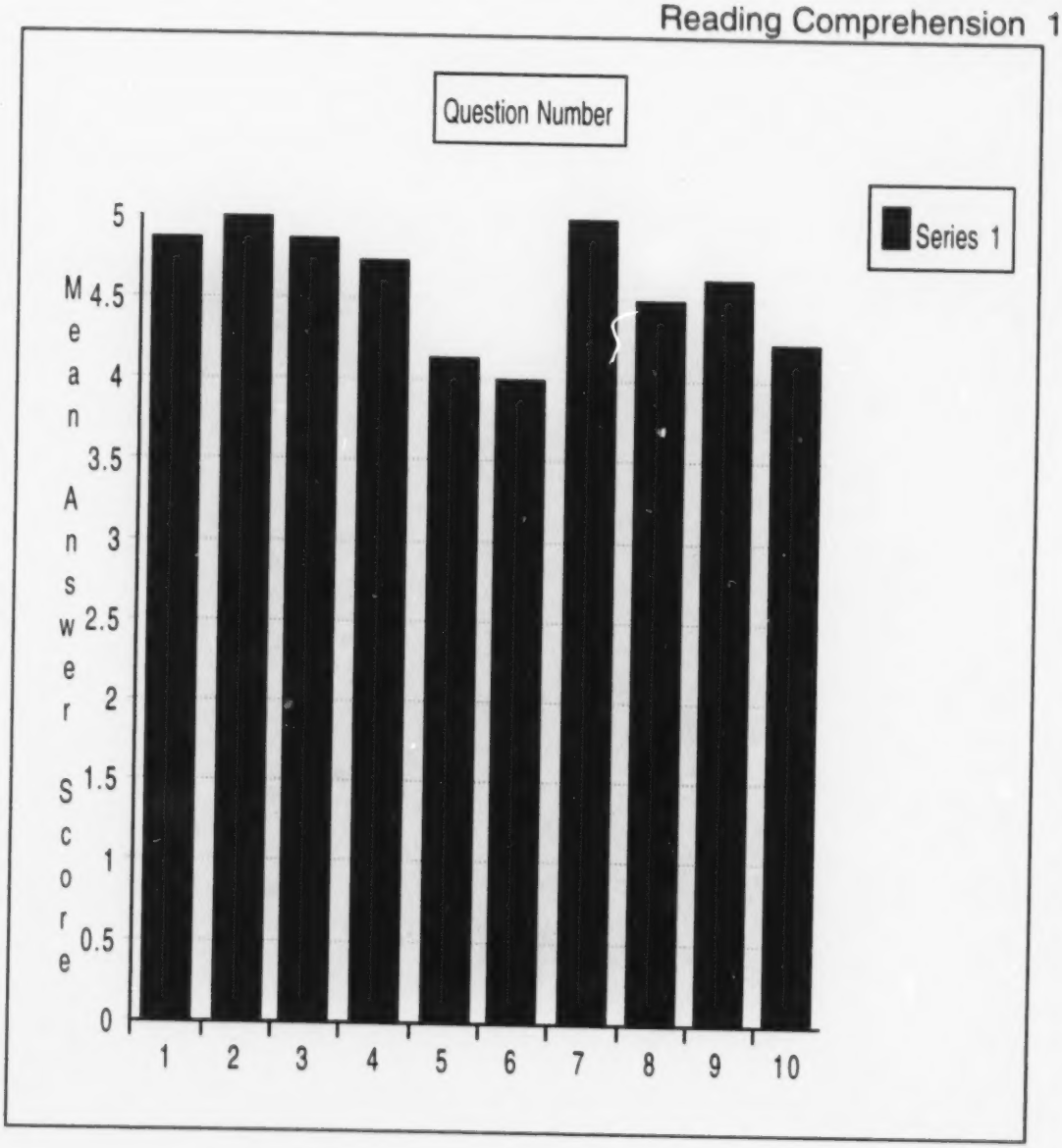
The questionnaire consisted of ten statements that the subjects rated on a scale from one to five. The statements had teachers rate the importance of comprehending material in a reading program, and the

importance of different techniques used to demonstrate the ability to comprehend. Other statements looked at the teachers' perceptions of the students' increased reading over the course of a year, as well as presenting material before reading begins.

In the interview, the subjects responded to general questions on their approach to teaching reading, whether or not they ascribe to a certain philosophical approach to reading, and their perceptions of the effect of their approach on children's reading ability, for above average, average, and below average learners.

RESULTS

Results were collected separately from the questionnaires as well as the interviews. Questionnaires were examined for commonalities and themes. Interviews were examined in the same manner. The following chart shows mean answer scores calculated from the questionnaire data.


Question Number
Series 1
Mean Answer Score
5
4.5
4
3.5
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
0.5
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

For the questionnaire, most teachers rated five for all the statements, meaning that they strongly agreed with the statement. All but one teacher strongly agreed with the first statement, in that basic skills instruction is necessary in building proficient readers. One teacher somewhat agreed to the statement. All teachers strongly agreed with the statement that children should understand that reading and writing are whole tasks. Most agreed that an important factor in any reading program is for students to comprehend material successfully.

Most strongly agreed that students should be able to demonstrate their ability to comprehend orally, as well as writing in a test format and journal, and participating in group discussions. Two teachers rated answering questions in a test format as low and two teachers rated writing in a journal format as low. One teacher rated participating in a group discussion as higher than the other techniques listed in demonstrating comprehension.

Teachers either somewhat, or strongly, agreed that students should rely on each other for support in reading, except for one respondent. All teachers felt their students showed an increase in reading over the course of the year and that it was important that students receive information on a new topic before reading begins.

For the interviews, many common themes arose. No teachers assigned a name to their approach to teaching language arts. The main

ideas for these teachers is to teach their students to become proficient readers, through integrating the curriculum and by building "enthusiasm and confidence". For the teachers that actually use journals, they feel it is important to have the students write about their own lives, because they become more enthusiastic learners. One teacher emphasized the importance of teaching phonics. While several of the students did not learn to read in first grade, teachers felt it necessary to push the traditional approach in second grade in order for the students to succeed.

Starting in third grade, the students have a separate time period for English. During this time they learn grammar. There is always a writing assignment to follow up the lesson. This is used as assessment for understanding. There is an emphasis in all grades on writing, even in the first couple of years as soon as sounds are learned.

While different classes are using the same program in reading, there is a logical progression for the students. Every teacher emphasized that weekly spelling tests are given. The teachers try to use writing in all curriculum areas. In the first two years, much time is spent on learning sounds, with follow up in the Skillpack part of the program. Skillpack is a workbook that emphasizes lessons learned in the reading lesson with the reader. One teacher takes weekly spelling words out of the novel the students are reading, and has the students write their own news article

about the reading. All teachers stressed the importance of following a program, because of the progression throughout the year.

Teachers found that students knew the answers to more comprehension questions if they were reading something they enjoyed or could relate to their life. While some of the basal readers provided comprehension questions, others did not and the teacher added them to the program. There is an importance to reviewing vocabulary before reading begins. Teachers used similar types of questions in reading comprehension. They begin with factual and detail questions about the story, and move into main concepts and more inferential questions. One teacher found that the class was low in factual and detail, where they were "fine" in main ideas. With below average readers, teachers found that working one-on-one with the student increased ability to focus on the reading and ultimately work independently to complete a written assignment or move completely from individual help. All teachers emphasized the importance of reading aloud both by teachers and students. For even average learners, they agreed that students need to organize thoughts and write them down on paper.

Overall, teachers seemed positive about their programs and did not offer much information on desire to change, or add. For those who did, it was mainly about the basal readers. They found that students are hesitant to returning to the basal after reading a novel or some reading outside of

the basal. One teacher stressed how the English books were "boring" to both the students and the teacher. She feels that the students do not use the thought process because the instructions are so basic. Another teacher added that they should "update the reader". One advantage is that she knows the difficult pages for the previous years' students and is able to point them out to the present class. One teacher added that she enjoyed having four novels throughout the year for her students. She has received much positive feedback from her students.

All teachers feel they need more time. One teacher found that much of her time is spent on phonics and working with students to learn the sounds. She would like more time for writing projects and to be able to use literature around themes in the classroom. Some found that drama was an important part, because the students "have fun" with what they read.

All teachers emphasized the need for more time with their students. In a private school, where outside, or specialty, teachers are brought in, the students do not have as much time in the classroom. This can be seen as both beneficial and non-beneficial. For the teachers, they have more things to plan and teach in less time. While most spend much of the time on reading and writing, there is much that they are not covering. While many students may need more individual help, they may not have enough time to increase success in certain areas. On the other hand, the students

are able to enjoy extra classes in art and music that other schools may not provide or have resources for.

Every teacher emphasized the importance of the enthusiasm of students as well as teachers. The entire school participates in silent reading every day. During this time the teachers are reading. They agreed they needed to be doing something with reading instead of using the time to correct papers and doing other work. One teacher uses Sustained Silent Reading to accept oral book reports. This way, she is able to assess what the students are reading, and their understanding of what was read. She has noticed that because the boys are reading more factual types of books, they have a "greater general knowledge" about things than the girls who read more fantasy books.

One teacher stated that if she shows excitement about a book then the students will have a positive attitude from the beginning and enjoy it more. If they do not understand something about the story, because of a different time period, some teachers bring in pictures and discuss how things used to be. This way the students are able to relate to the story more, and have a better understanding of the ideas. With time, one teacher mentioned that she would like her students to publish their writing and be able to share more of their ideas with the class.

One teacher, as mentioned in the results, has several students that did not learn to read early on in school. While these students have

diagnosed learning difficulties, she has found that one-on-one help has increased their ability to understand and read words correctly. In a school where classes are kept small, no more than twenty students in a room, teachers are able to focus on certain students that need the extra assistance. One teacher added that she would like to have a full-time aide, so she would be able to do more small group activities, and take individual children who need the help. Fortunately, the school enjoys a great parent participation in the classrooms. Full-time aides will most likely not be added to the programs, however, the parents are happy to help and enjoy seeing what their children are learning.

DISCUSSION

Any research on students' skills should also include a discussion on assessment of ability. For this particular research, it is necessary to assess students' reading comprehension abilities. Teachers must assess the performance of below average students to understand why they are not improving in reading comprehension. Once again, assessment takes time, however it is an educator's responsibility to provide the level of help necessary to build on their foundation of reading skills.

There seems to be a need for balance between reading comprehension and listening comprehension. Students need to increase attention to what they are reading and hearing. Materials must be used so the students can relate to and show interest in what they are learning, in

order for them to increase their attention span during reading. It may be possible to have the students choose what they read, within limits. This way they will enjoy the reading and be able to understand and comprehend the information.

It is also necessary to update readers and other sources of information that students are receiving in the classroom. If they are finding the lessons monotonous, they will not be motivated to learn about the material. Many textbooks do not allow students the opportunity to use their thought processes. Therefore, books should offer questions that give the students a chance to think.

When emphasizing reading comprehension, the teacher must encourage quality work from the students. Many students show poor abilities because they feel they should do their work quickly. Each person works at a different pace and it may take some a bit more time to finish an assignment than others. They must slow their pace in order to understand what they are reading. This way, they will grasp what they are reading, they will be reading accurately, and they will be using their thought processes more than if they rushed to finish.

One of the obvious limitations of this study is the number of subjects. Results cannot be generalized because of the small number. Even though all teachers had agreement in most areas of the study, results can differ with an added sample of teachers from a different school,

public or private. Results coincided with previous research in relation to enthusiasm of the teacher and the students, as well as the practice of discussing a topic before reading begins.

From a school that has moved from a traditional skills approach to more of an integrated language arts program, teachers seem happy with their programs in their classrooms, as well as their students' achievements. While some teachers mentioned that they would like to use more of a whole language approach with literature, it seems they are moving in that direction and the results are positive.

It is important that teachers emphasize the ability to read accurately, to their students. This may mean discussing the reading before the lesson begins and offering suggestions to the students of what to look for in the reading. Students need to build on each learning experience in order to achieve in future years of education. If they understand something early on, they can use it at a future time in their life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, M. J. (1990). Beginning To Read: Thinking and Learning about Print. Illinois: Center for the Study of Reading.

American Psychological Association. (1994). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. (4th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Anderson, R. C.; Hiebart, E. H.; Scott, J. A.; Wilkinson, I. A. (1984). Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading. Washington, D. C.: The National Institute of Education.

Campbell, R. and Scrivens, G. (1995). The Teacher Role During Sustained Silent reading (SSR). Reading, 29. 2-4.

Cunningham, J. W. and Wall, L. K. (March 1994). Teaching good readers to read better. Journal of Reading, 37. 480-486.

Cunningham, P. M. and Allington, R. L. (1991). Words, letters, sounds, and big books. Learning, 20. 91-95.

Dudley-Marling, C. (1995). Whole Language: It's a Matter of Principles. Reading and Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties, 11. 109-117.

Erpelding, D. (1990). Integrating Whole Language with the Basal reader to Increase the use of Language and Comprehension of Literature. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Gee, E. J. (1995). The Effects of a Whole Language Approach to Reading Instruction on Reading Comprehension. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Hedrick, W. B. and Cunningham, J. W. (1995). The Relationship between wide reading and listening comprehension of written language. Journal of Reading Behavior, 27. 425-438.

Mavrognes, N. (May 1990). Helping parents help their children become literate. Young Children, 45. 4-9.

McDonald, R. R., and Burris, A. (Summer 1995) Is the Whole Language Philosophy working? Reading Improvement, 32. 127-128.

Morrow, L. M. and Smith, J. K. (Summer 1990). The effects of group size on interactive storybook reading. Reading Research Quarterly, 25. 213-231.

Reutzel, D. R.; Hollingsworth, P. M.; Eldredge, J. L. (January 1991)/ Oral reading instruction: The impact on student reading development. Reading Research Quarterly, 29. 41-59.

Routman, R. (1991). Invitations: Changing as Teachers and Learners K-12. Toronto, Canada: Irwin Publishing.

Rusnak, G. E. (May 1994). Whole Language: Why Bother? Reading Teacher, 47. 600-607.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the following:

Demographic information on teacher:

_____Female _____Male
_____Years of experience in teaching
_____Years of experience in present school
_____Experience with in-service education in the language arts area
Approximate number of hours of in-service in:
_____basic reading strategies
_____whole language instruction

Demographic information on students:
(Indicate number of students in each category)

_____Female _____Male

Ethnicity:
_____Caucasian _____African-American _____Hispanic
_____Native-American _____Other

Reading Test Scores (last year)
_____above average _____average _____below average

Please read each statement and mark the scale from 1 to 5, 1 indicating strongly disagree, 2 somewhat disagree, 3 no opinion, 4 somewhat agree, 5 strongly agree.

1. I believe that basic skills instruction is necessary in building proficient readers.

1 2 3 4 5

2. It is important that children understand that reading and writing are whole tasks, not just the individual skills of sounding out words, spelling, learning parts of a sentence, etc.

1 2 3 4 5

3. An important factor in any reading program is for students to comprehend material successfully.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Students should be able to demonstrate their ability to comprehend reading material by:

answering questions orally

1 2 3 4 5

answering questions in writing in a test format

1 2 3 4 5

answering questions in writing in a journal format

1 2 3 4 5

participating in a group discussion about the reading

1 2 3 4 5

5. An important aspect of a reading program is that students rely on each other for support in reading as well as the teacher.

1 2 3 4 5

6. Students show an increase in reading over the course of the school year.

1 2 3 4 5

7. It is important that information on a new topic be given before reading begins.

1 2 3 4 5